

Requiem of Summer

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Summary: The third installment to the "Evil Torrent" series. After coming out of his imprisonment, Taikoku plans on taking back the throne to the Nether Realm. Learning about the armors, the old lord plans to obtain the magical suits. Meanwhile, new obstacles appear for both Hana and Natsumi. Old faces appear and Taikoku takes what the Ronins hold dear the most.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter One

**A/N: **Hello, everyone! Welcome to the first chapter of Requiem of Summer! This story is the third installment of the "Evil Torrent" series. If you did not read the first two stories, please do so. You will not understand what is going on unless you do. I do not own any of the characters from the Ronin Warriors. I only own Hana, Natsumi, their family, and the villains. Also, a huge thank you to, Halogazer, who beta read my whole story! Please review to let me know what you think. :)

* * *

><p>Cye, Ryo and Hana all gawked at the two-story, white-painted house in front of them, the front door and the shutters were painted a forest-green. The curb appeal wasn't bad, either. There were two Japanese Holly bushes on either side of the door, and small pink and yellow tulips were blooming in a flower bed in front of the house. To their right was a big old Japanese maple tree that was starting to bud. It was definitely something they weren't expecting when they were called for a meeting.<p>

Kento stood to the side with a big grin on his round face, his arms crossed over his broad chest. "It has five bedrooms, two bathrooms, a basement, kitchen, and living room," he explained. "There is also a pool in the backyard. Neat, huh?"

The three friends all turned their heads at the same time to look at him.

"Kento, how did you obtain this house again?" Cye inquired. Shock was clearly still on his face along with the others. There was no way he could have afforded such a huge house. There had to be a catch or something.

"A regular at the restaurant was talking about this house. My mom overheard him and asked about it. He gave her a deal on it," Kento replied. He looked at the building in front of them. "She wanted me to have a place to call my own. But the house is too big for me, so I want you all to move in." He could feel a sense of pride at his friends' reactions. It wasn't every day that he was able to present something this big to them.

"All of us?" Ryo asked dubiously. "Are you sure about this?"

Kento snorted at the question. "Dude, we all lived together at Mia's house. What's the difference?" Kento asked with a grin. "Of course I'm sure about this."

There was silence as everyone pondered over the situation given to them. Hana walked over and wrapped an arm around Kento's shoulders, a smile plastered on her face. "Sounds like fun. Count me in," she said. "Of course, I'll be paying rent."

"There is no rent," Kento said, looking at the dark-haired woman next to him. "Ma already bought the house."

"Still, it wouldn't feel right," Cye added as he walked over to his friend. "I got a job at the aquarium, so I can give you some money."

"The one you brought me to? With Umi?" Hana asked, looking at Cye.

"That's the one. I'm going to be monitoring the aquatic life and giving medication when the time comes. It'll be good because it'll put my knowledge to the test," Cye responded with a smile.

"That's great!" Hana exclaimed as she gave him a big kiss on the lips. "You said you would like to work there someday." Cye smiled gently at Hana.

"Dude, if you keep cooking me food, that's all the payment I need," Kento said with a wave of his hand. He would choose Cye's cooking over anything.

"I guess I should look for a job," Ryo said. "I don't want to be a freeloader, either." He was used to living on his own already being that his father was always out on excursions. He didn't really have to worry about money. But now things were going to be different if he was going to be living with his friends.

"Why don't you work with us at the restaurant?" Hana suggested. "I'm sure Mama Faun can use you."

Ryo simply shook his head. "My place isn't in a restaurant. I would

like to work outdoors if I can. Let me see what I can dish up."

"So, it's settled then. All of us will be sharing the house," Kento confirmed with a fist pump in the air. "When Sage and Rowen come to visit, they'll have a place to stay."

"What about Natsumi?" Hana asked. "Can she have a place, too?"

"Doesn't Natsumi live with her father and her uncle?" Ryo asked. "We could ask her, but I don't know if she'll want to."

"She does live with her father," Cye said. "However, whenever I talked to her about her family, she always changed the subject. Maybe this will be good for her." He thought back on the time when he went to her house. He looked into a room that sent chills down his spine, the room with no windows. When Natsumi found him, it looked like she was about to have a panic attack. "It seems life at the home isn't all roses and sunshine."

Hana thought about what Cye had said. It was true that Natsumi never mentioned her family around them. Her expression always seemed to change, and she always tried to dodge any questions if asked. "I'll meet up with her and toss the suggestion to her."

"All right. I'll go tell Ma the good news. We should move in as soon as possible. I want to get this move done and over with," Kento said with a wink.

* * *

><p>The next day came with a clear blue sky and the sun smiling down on the Earth. Spring was in full bloom as people walked the busy streets of Tokyo in light attire. It was around noon when Hana met Natsumi at a small caf   to discuss some matters regarding the house.<p>

The brunette sipped her iced-cold lemonade, enjoying the chill against her throat and the taste of fresh lemons on her palate. A plate of various cookies slammed onto the white plastic table. Natsumi looked up with a start to find Hana smiling down at her.

"I didn't know what kind you liked, so I got a whole bunch," Hana said as she sat across from her friend. "In my opinion, the chocolate and mint cookies are the best here." She took a cookie and popped it in her mouth, savoring the mixture of chocolate and mint on her tongue. "So good."

"I'm trying to go on a diet," Natsumi said with a small laugh as her hand moved up and down her arm. "These aren't going to help me, but they do look delicious."

Hana raised an eyebrow at the woman in front of her. "What diet do you need to go on? You have an awesome body, and I'm sure Ryo wouldn't object to that," Hana smiled as she popped another cookie in her mouth.

Natsumi's milky-white skin suddenly turned cherry-red at the comment. "I    I mean    he hasn't even seen   " she stuttered as she looked down at her hands, which were now on her lap.

"I know. It has only been a month," Hana said with a roll of her eyes. "I'm not pressuring you. I'm just saying it's been a while since you agreed to be his girlfriend. I attacked Cye on our "third date?" I can't remember."

Natsumi fidgeted in her seat. "I guess I'm just shy. I never had a real boyfriend before." It did take her a while to get over what had happened between her and Cye. Having Ryo confess his feelings to her and then ask her out on a date wasn't something she was prepared for. However, after a month, they went on their first date.

"It's fine," Hana said with a wave of her hand. "I'm only teasing you. We're here for more important matters." She took a lemon cookie this time and popped it into her mouth.

"You said that over the phone," Natsumi recalled. Hana called her earlier that morning with eagerness in her voice. She insisted that they meet at the small caf  , for she had something she wanted to ask. "What kind of important matters did you want to discuss with me?"

"Apparently, Mama Faun, Kento's mother, got him this five-bedroom house. The thing is huge, but not as huge as Mia's house," Hana stated. "Anyway, he wants all of us to move in with him."

"All of us?" Natsumi asked in surprise.

"Yes. I asked about you because I think it would be fun if you joined us. You can be with Ryo," Hana beamed with excitement. A frown settled across Natsumi's face. "What's wrong?"

"I can't move in with you guys," Natsumi said sadly. "I have to be at home." Anxiety was rising within her.

"Well, I'm sure your father would like you to move on," Hana said. She looked at Natsumi, noticing a change in her actions. It looked like her body was tensing up at the situation.

Natsumi shook her head. "I  |I can't, and that's my final answer," she said. "If you will excuse me, I have some things I have to get done before going home." The timid girl got up from her seat and hurried out the caf   door, almost bumping into Ryo without noticing him.

"How'd it go?" Ryo asked as he walked over to Hana, who was looking at the entrance in shock.

"I'm sure you just saw her run out of here like she had fire on her heels," Hana said as she looked up at him. Not just fire, but a look of fear.

"I told you she wouldn't go for it," Ryo said as he sat down in the chair Natsumi recently occupied. "There is something with her family she doesn't want us to know about. Even with me, she doesn't want me to meet her at her house. I always had to wait for her a few houses down from her place. I haven't questioned her about it." He looked down at the plate full of baked goods. "What's with all the cookies?"

"I got them for the two of us," Hana sighed as she took another chocolate mint cookie. "I guess we can bring them back to the house. I'm sure Kento will annihilate them." A small smile broke out across her pink lips.

"I'm sure he will," Ryo chuckled as he took a lemon-frosted one. He slowly chewed the cookie as he looked out the café window at the crowds walking past them.

Hana stared at the sweets, deep in thought. "Ryo, how is she with you?" Hana asked as she looked up at the dark-haired warrior.

"What do you mean?" Ryo asked as he looked back at her with a raised brow.

"She's happy, right? It's been four months since the last battle. I just want to know if everything is okay," Hana said softly.

A smile formed across his lips. "For someone who was tortured because of her, you really have grown to care for her. Not something we expected, to be honest with you."

"After what happened and hearing the truth, I couldn't be mad at her. I've hurt so many more people than her," Hana said, her voice almost cold. "I hurt Cye in more ways than she could ever have to me." Hana could see that Natsumi was a follower and not a leader. She didn't seem to have much confidence in herself. It also seemed like she didn't have many friends before she met Cye and the others.

Ryo placed a hand on her small shoulder. "Like we have said to her, it's not your fault. Evil has a way to manipulate us. And to answer your question, she is very happy when we are together."

Hana smiled at her fiery friend. "I'm glad to hear that."

* * *

><p>The men grunted as they moved the three-seated, black, leather couch into the living room. The heavy furniture landed with a thud onto the grayish carpet below. Kento wiped his brow of the sweat that had accumulated during the move. Both Cye and Ryo sat on the couch, their chests rapidly moving up and down with heavy breaths.<p>

"Where did you get this couch?" Hana asked as she distributed water bottles to the exhausted men.

"It was actually in the garage at my parents' house," Kento answered. He took a swig of the iced-cold beverage, his body instantly cooling down. "I would say it was there for a few years. My ma got a new couch, and we didn't really want to get rid of the old one, so we put it in storage."

"It's a very nice couch," Natsumi commented as she ran her delicate fingers across the smooth material, the scent of genuine leather teasing her nostrils. "It almost looks and smells brand new."

"Yep, and it's ours now," Kento said with pride as he patted the armrest to the furniture.

"This place is huge," Natsumi said as she wandered the area. She entered the kitchen that had marble countertops and a gas stove. The cabinets were made of cherry wood. She made her way back into the living room, impressed. "How many bedrooms did you say this place had?"

"Five. Hana and Cye are claiming one of the bedrooms on this level. There are three on the second level of the house. Ryo has a room, and I have a room. When Sage and Rowen come to visit, they can share a room," Kento explained.

"But I only counted four rooms. What are you going to do with the fifth one?" Natsumi asked as she counted her fingers.

Ryo got up from his seat and walked over to her. "Let me show you," he said as he wrapped an arm around her shoulder. He guided the girl over to the bedroom on the main level of the house, with the others following suit. When he opened the door, there was a twin-sized bed and dresser occupying the space. Natsumi looked up at Ryo dubiously. "When you are ready, this room is yours."

"Tâ€|this is my room?" she asked. "But-"

Ryo placed an index finger over her mouth before she could get another word out. "When you are ready. We aren't forcing you, but we will be here for a long time. If, by chance, you decide to join us, you have a place here."

A small smile appeared across her pink lips. "Thank you, all of you."

"No need to thank us," Cye said. "We hope that someday you can use this room."

Natsumi's eyes saddened as she looked at the display. It would be nice to live with her friends and not have to worry about anything. Ryo looked down and noticed the solemn look in her eyes. He squeezed her shoulder gently, rousing her from her thoughts. "You okay?" he asked softly.

She nodded her head and smiled. "I was just thinking about how I have such great people in my life now."

"Aw, shucks. You're making me blush," Kento said as he rubbed the back of his head.

"We still have the basement the check out," Hana mentioned as she grabbed Natsumi's hand. She nearly dragged the girl down a flight of stairs to a fully finished basement. The room was fully carpeted and was filled with boxes in various sizes. "I have no idea what is going in here."

"I would like to put a pool table down here," Kento said as the rest of the crew made it down to the bottom level.

"I didn't know you played pool," Cye said looking at his friend. "Since when do you play pool?"

"On occasion," Kento shrugged. "And I always saw pool tables in basements on TV."

"That doesn't mean you need to have one," Cye objected. "I say an aquarium would fit nice down here." He walked over to the nearest wall and placed a hand on it. "It could go right here."

"Hold on, if I can't get my pool table, you can't have your fish friends," Kento said as he pointed a finger at his water-loving friend.

"Seriously, you two?" Ryo asked as he looked at the both of them with a raised eyebrow. "You sound like a married couple."

"Well, what would you put down here?" Kento asked, folding his arms over his broad chest. "Let's hear it."

Ryo stood where he was for a moment, pondering on the possibilities of the area. "If there was a place for a fireplaceâ€¦" Ryo said.

"No fire!" Kento and Cye both exclaimed.

The two girls watched with wide eyes as the men argued over the vast space. Laughter soon erupted throughout the room as the two girls laughed out loud, making the three men stop their bickering. They looked at the two girls with questionable looks on their features.

"And what's so funny?" Kento asked with his hands on his hips.

"You guys," Hana laughed as tears beaded at the corners of her eyes. "I've never seen you guys act like this. If you ask me, I would say it was a three-way marriage." Her arms wrapped around her mid-section as she continued her laughing fit.

"Three-way marriage?" Ryo asked with a raised brow.

"I'm sorry, Ryo," Natsumi said as she wiped the few tears from her eyes. "I didn't mean to laugh at you."

Ryo smiled and shook his head. "Don't apologize. I love seeing you laugh and smile. It warms me up seeing you happy." Natsumi blushed and smiled back at him.

"I guess you guys are going to have to duel each other in order to find out what goes down here," Hana said, her laughter dying down.

"A library could go down here," Natsumi suggested with a giggle.

This caused Kento to scrunch up his nose at the idea that was just presented. "A library? That's so boring! Who would want to come down here to read?" he asked.

"People who can actually read?" Cye said with a smirk.

Kento grabbed Cye's head under his armpit in a head-lock. "You think you're a real jokester, huh?" Kento asked as Cye struggled to get free from Kento's grip.

Ryo shook his head at the two and placed a hand on Natsumi's

shoulder. "We'll resume this matter later," he said as he looked down at his girlfriend. "I should take you home. It's getting late."

Natsumi looked at her watch, noticing the late hour and nodded. "Yeah. Thank you for having me over," she said.

"You are always welcome here," Cye said, who managed to get free from his pit trap.

Natsumi waved at the others as she followed Ryo back up the stairs.

* * *

><p>The stars twinkled in the dark sky above the couple as they walked down the sidewalk hand in hand. The spring breeze blew gently against them. Even though they were still in the city, it was pretty quiet. The typical bustle of the city had quieted with the fall of night. Natsumi's hand tightened within Ryo's as she smiled to herself.<p>

"You know I don't have to be home right away," she said. "My father is out on a business trip for a few days."

Ryo chuckled to himself. "You caught me," he said, flashing his pearly whites at her. "I just wanted to spend some time alone with you."

Natsumi smiled up at Ryo as he led her to a park. The area was practically deserted when they entered; a few couples lingered on some of the benches. The two of them sat on the cool grass, bodies close together as they looked up at the starry sky. Natsumi pointed at some of the constellations she knew. She looked at Ryo and noticed he was staring at her; his eyes had that sincere look.

He placed a hand on her soft cheek, looking into her gorgeous Persian-blue eyes. His face slowly moved in closer before taking her lips with his. Her whole body went limp as his tongue explored her mouth. His other hand grabbed the other side of her face as the kiss deepened. Natsumi moaned softly as she kissed him back, her tongue meeting his in a dance.

Ryo slowly placed Natsumi on her back, his lips still connected with hers. A moan escaped his throat as he broke the kiss. He looked down at the woman he'd come to love and placed one more kiss on her swollen lips before sitting up. She sat up with her breathing uneven as she looked at him.

"Why did you stop?" Natsumi wondered.

"I'm not going any further until you tell me it's okay," Ryo said. "I don't want to end up doing something that you don't want me to do."

Natsumi smiled and placed her hand on top of his. She was lucky to have someone who understood her. He also asked before doing anything. "Thank you, Ryo."

A smile broke across his face as he kissed her forehead. "I love you,

Natsumi."

"I love you, too, Ryo," Natsumi said softly as a warm sensation filled her entire being.

"And I want _you _to be ready," he said. She nodded as she got to her feet. Ryo followed suit and took her hand back into his. "We should get you home." Natsumi nodded in agreement, a sad expression plaguing her features as they exited out of the park.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter Two

Water boiled in a middle-sized pot as udon noodles were added. Natsumi stirred the noodles with a wooden spoon to avoid them sticking to the bottom. Ryo sat at the kitchen table, watching her as she maneuvered to and from the stove. It was the first time he was invited over to her house since she started dating him last month.

When he first entered the house, the strong scent of lilac hit his nostrils. The walls were covered in paintings, and there was no sign of any family portraits. It was weird being that when he went to Kento's, portraits were the only thing on the walls. He also realized that no one was home that day. Natsumi led him immediately to the kitchen where she insisted on making him lunch.

"Say, Natsumi," Ryo said as he looked around the room. The walls were cream-colored with oak cabinets attached to them. A painting of a tall mountain that was surrounded by evergreens was hanging on the wall by the kitchen table. "Why does the house smell of lilac?" It wasn't just the hallway; it was the kitchen, too, minus the smell of the cooking noodles.

"My mother loved lilacs," Natsumi answered as she added seasonings to the pot. "After she passed, my father made sure the whole house smelled of her favorite flower. If you don't like it, I'm sorry."

"It's not that," Ryo said with a shake of his head. "I was just curious." He looked down at his hands that were folded on the table. He felt guilty about asking her the question that resulted in mentioning her deceased mother.

"Oh, good," Natsumi said with relief. She walked over to the polished wooden table with two glasses of water. She placed a glass in front of Ryo and smiled at him. "I wouldn't know what to do if you didn't like the scent."

"It's fine," he said. "I'm sorry about bringing up your mother."

"It's not a problem," Natsumi said softly. "I was really young when she died. I don't really remember a whole lot about her." She sat down across from Ryo, taking a sip of her water. "How's the house coming along? Is your room all set?"

Ryo nodded his head. "Yeah. I didn't have a whole lot to begin with.

I used to live in a cabin in the woods before moving with everyone."

"A cabin? Where's your parents?" Natsumi asked, astonished.

"Well, my mother passed when I was really little, too," Ryo explained. "My father is a wildlife photographer, so he's always away on long assignments. I don't really get to see him, but he does support me financially."

"I see," she said. "I guess we have more in common than we thought."

Ryo smiled at her as she got back up and headed toward the stove. "Say, what does your father do? He's never really around, is he?"

Natsumi stopped in front of the stove and stood there in silence. Boiling water splashed out of the pot and onto the stove, making a sizzling noise. The noise snapped Natsumi out of her stupor as she took the wooden spoon and stirred the water, scrapping some of the wheat noodles that were stuck at the bottom. Anxiety was slowly creeping up on her as she watched the noodles spin in a circle.

"Natsumi?" Ryo asked with concern. He leaned over to the side to get a better look at what was happening. Did he say something wrong, again?

"I-I'm fine," Natsumi said in a nervous tone. "My father is a management consultant. That's why he is always on trips to different places."

"I see," Ryo said, curiosity pecking at his brain. "You also live with your uncle?"

"Y-yes. My Uncle Tim lives with us," Natsumi said. Her nerves were wracking inside her body with all the questions she was being asked. "My uncle works for a security company. He works on the cameras."

"That's fascinating," Ryo said. "I didn't know your family was so cool."

"Yes, they're cool," Natsumi said as she added more seasonings with a shaky hand. "Let's stop talking about my family, okay?"

"Oh, sure," Ryo said, feeling guilty once more. "I'm sorry that I asked you so many questions. I feel horrible."

"Don't," Natsumi said as she poured the noodles into two medium-sized ceramic white bowls. She walked over and placed the noodle bowl in front of Ryo. "Eat up." Ryo looked down and saw a bowl of just noodles swimming in broth. "It's kake udon."

"I realize that," Ryo said as he took a spoonful of the hot broth and placed it in his mouth. His eyes opened wide as his palate was bombarded with a salty taste. It was almost like she took a container of salt and dumped the whole content into the pot. He forced the food down his throat and immediately took a drink of water, satisfying his

thirst.

"Is something the matter?" Natsumi asked as she watched him chug the whole glass in one sitting.

"No. It's good," Ryo said with a small smile, almost choking.

"I don't believe you," Natsumi said, her eyes narrowing at the man in front of her. "I saw the way you reacted. What's wrong with the food?"

"Okay, fine. It's a little on the salty side," Ryo admitted.

Natsumi eyed Ryo as she took a spoonful of noodles into her mouth. She immediately took the utensil out and placed it back in the bowl. She made a face as she took a drink of water. "I guess it is," she said as she moved the bowl away from her. "I'm sorry, Ryo. I guess I wasn't really paying attention when I was adding the seasonings."

A chuckle erupted from Ryo's throat as he smiled at his girlfriend. "It's okay. Why don't we go out to eat instead?"

"Are you sure? I can make us sandwiches," Natsumi suggested as her cheeks turned pink. "I can make those without screwing up."

"If that's what you want," he said. "I would love a sandwich. If you have pickles, that would be icing on top of the cake."

"Yes, we have pickles," she giggled. She got up from her seat and removed the bowls from the table, dumping the contents into the trash.

* * *

><p>A pair of determined blue eyes studied the open book in front of him. A single sweat drop ran down the center of Kento's face as he tapped his pencil against the table. He let out a frustrated groan as he slammed his pencil down, messing up his dark-blue hair with his hands.<p>

"What's with all the noise?" Hana asked as she walked into the living room. She found Kento slumped on the couch as if in defeat.

"I'm studying to become a chef. Why do I need to take these classes?" he asked, exasperated. "It doesn't make any sense, man!"

Hana leaned over the table that was flooded with papers and an open textbook. "Algebra?"

"_Advanced_ algebra. I'm pretty sure the Devil himself invented it," Kento said.

The dark-haired woman giggled and sat down on the couch next to her stressed friend. "I can help you."

Kento leaned forward as Hana explained the equation that was on one of the pages in the open textbook. His eyes moved from the dark-haired woman sitting next to him to the notebook filled with numbers and letters. After the first month of having Cye back to normal and Hana getting her boyfriend back, he was having trouble

adjusting to everything. Every time he saw her, his heart ached. Some days he tried to avoid her, but he soon found out that it was of no use.

As the months went by, it became easier for him to be in her company. He started to care for her more like a sister figure than a friend. His eyes traveled down to the silver bangle that hung freely from her wrist. It was something he got her last Christmas after the chaos that had happened. A small smile crossed his lips as he brought his attention back to his homework.

"Are you paying attention to what I'm saying?" Hana asked as she eyed the man next to her.

"Y-yeah," Kento said as he rubbed the back of his head. "It's like a foreign language to me."

"Would you like me to go over it again?" Hana asked, her eyes not leaving his.

The black watch around Kento's wrist beeped once, gaining the man's attention. Kento looked at the time and stood up from his seat on the couch. "Maybe later. I have to get going to the restaurant. You working tonight?"

Hana shook her head. "I have the night off. Tomorrow I'll be in."

"All right," Kento said as he stretched his arms over his head. "I'll see ya tonight."

"Have fun," Hana said as she, too, got up from her spot. "Dinner will be here for you when you return."

"Yes! I can't wait," Kento grinned and exited the room.

The sound of the front door shutting could be heard as Cye made his way into the living space.

"What was going on here?" he asked as he looked at the mess that was on top of the wooden coffee table.

"Kento was doing homework," Hana replied. "I was trying to help him, but his focus was elsewhere." She covered her mouth as she tried to suppress a giggle.

"Not surprised. His attention span is worse than a five-year-old," Cye said with a shake of his head. "I guess we should leave everything the way it is."

"It would be best," Hana said. "We wouldn't want to mix up anything."

Cye smiled at his girlfriend. "The stew is simmering on the stove."

"I let Kento know that there'll be food for him when he gets home," Hana smiled. "He seemed very excited about that."

A chuckle emanated from Cye as he took Hana's hand in his. "I also

finished the bedroom."

Cye led her to the first room that was located next to the kitchen. He slowly opened the door to reveal a queen-sized bed that was dressed in a light blue bedspread. Two polished oak dressers stood against the wall across from the bed by the door. Hana could see that some of her stuff was placed on top of one of the dressers. She walked into the room and sat down on the end of the bed, a smile plastered on her face.

"It's not a mess yet," Cye said as he followed suit. "I hope it's okay."

"Of course it's okay," Hana said. "I would have helped put things away." She looked over her shoulder and saw a brown bear sitting on the nightstand to the left. The bear's body was roughed up, and it was missing an eye. It definitely saw better days.

Cye followed her gaze to the old bear. "Oh. I found that in one of your boxes. I thought you might like it if it was by you."

A small but sad smile formed across her lips. "I've had that bear since I was little. When I moved into the apartment, I took it with me. If I hadn't, it would have been burnt to a crisp in the fire." Her tone was low and filled with sorrow as she explained her treasure. "It's one of the things I have left from my home and family."

Cye took his hand and placed it on her cheek, wiping away a lone tear that escaped from her sad eyes. With the other hand, he brushed a strand of her short black hair away from her face. Hana turned to look at the one she loved in the eyes. His teal eyes were soft and loving as he looked into her cobalt blue eyes. He leaned in and captured her lips with his. His tongue massaged the inside of her mouth as he pulled her closer to his body. She ran her delicate hands through his auburn hair, a moan escaping her throat as her tongue danced with his. Something ignited within Cye as he pushed her on her back against the bed. Fire coursed through his body as he placed a hand on her breast, slowly massaging it. Hana broke the kiss and gently moved him off of her.

"What's wrong?" he asked, his breathing labored.

"We forgot to close the door," Hana said as she got up from the bed and closed the door. Before she could take a step back toward the bed, she could feel her body being slammed against the closed door.

"No one is here," Cye said huskily as he stood upon her, his hand up against the door. "Ryo is at Natsumi's house. We are all alone." He took her lips once again in a soaring, passionate kiss. His hands roamed the curves of her body. The kiss became more intense as he pressed her body hard against the door.

Hana moaned as she wrapped her arms around his neck, pressing his body to her. He placed one leg between hers, pressing up against her sweet spot.

"C-Cye!" she moaned as she started to grind her hips against his propped leg.

"I can't take this anymore," Cye groaned, his eyes filled with lust as he hastily removed the clothing that covered her perfect body. After Cye finished unclothing her, Hana returned the favor, practically ripping the clothing from his body in desperation.

Cye slammed her naked form against the door once more as he placed a hand between her legs. The heat that he felt radiating from her womanhood drove him crazy. He wanted, no, needed her. With a single finger, he flicked her swollen bud, causing her cry out in pleasure. Hands gripped his shoulders hard as he continued.

"Oh, godâ€¦" Hana cried as she felt her legs shake from beneath her, electricity flowing through her very being. Pressure started to build within her center as her hips grinded against his finger.

Cye leaned over and took an earlobe between his teeth, sending another jolt of electric pleasure to her body. "You like that, don't you?" he whispered in her ear. "Well, I'm not going to let you come just yet. I want to feel you come around me."

"Pleaseâ€¦" Cyeâ€¦" Hana pleaded as she yearned for her release. "I need toâ€¦"

"Not yet," Cye soothed as he took her to the bed. Hana whimpered as she lay on the bed, waiting for Cye to take her. She heard a ripping sound from the condom's package and, before she knew it, he was on top of her, his member at her entrance. He entered her depths with a single thrust, causing her cry out as he filled her. Wasting no time, he started pumping rapidly against her, holding onto the bed for support. The bed creaked loudly as he pounded her, her moans growing louder with each thrust he made. "Oh, godâ€¦" Hanaâ€¦"

"Cyeâ€¦ fasterâ€¦" Hana moaned as she felt the pleasure build within her.

The animal within him answered as he sped up his thrusts. He bent down and suckled the side of her neck. A growl erupted from his throat as he pulled out of her. Before she could question his action, she was flipped over to her hands and knees. He went behind her and inserted his shaft into her from behind. The new sensation from the position tripled the pleasure, her nerves standing to attention. She gripped the comforter as he pumped in and out, his sweaty body slapping against hers.

"You feel so good," Cye moaned as he felt his end draw near. "I can't take it much longer."

"Oh, my godâ€¦" Hana cried as she felt her body start to shake. Taking a trembling hand, she placed it by her sweet spot and started to rub herself.

"Yes, Hana, come for me," Cye panted as he pounded harder into her depths. "Let me feel you."

Hana cried as her body shook, warmth flowing throughout her body. Her walls gripped tightly around him as Cye let out a groan, releasing himself within her. The two sweaty bodies collapsed on the bed, chests rising up and down rapidly. Cye rolled over to the other side of the bed, wiping the sweat from his face.

"Haven'tâ€| done that in a whileâ€|" Hana panted.

"Yeah," Cye agreed. "It was long overdue."

Hana smiled and rolled onto her side, her head propped on her hand. "I haven't seen that side of you. Where did that come from?"

Cye looked at his love and chuckled. "Not sure myself."

"Well, I like it," Hana said as she kissed him on the lips. "The wild side of Cye."

Cye laughed until he heard the bedroom door open slowly. Both figures on the bed looked to find a very embarrassed Natsumi standing in the doorway.

"Oh, my god!" Natsumi shrieked as she quickly covered her eyes with her hands. "I-I'm so sorry! I came back with Ryo a-and we saw the pot on the stove. I didn't know "you guys wereâ€|busy". I should have knocked. I-I'm so sorry!" The brunette quickly shut the door. The couple could hear her rambling on afterward.

"Oh, boy," Hana said as she swung her legs over the edge of the bed. "I better go talk to her." Hana looked at Cye who had his eyes wide and his mouth partly open. The scene happened so fast, he didn't even know what to think. She giggled as she placed a kiss on the side of his mouth.

Ryo watched as Natsumi ran into the living room with her face covered. "What happened?" he asked as he saw the girl curled up on the leather couch. "Natsumi? Did something happen?"

"I don't want to talk about it," Natsumi said, trying to avoid eye contact. "Just go, please."

Hana emerged from the bedroom, fully clothed. "I'll talk to her, Ryo. Just give us a moment, okay?" Without any further questions, the confused warrior exited the living room and headed up to his room. Hana sighed and sat down next to her friend. She placed a gentle hand on Natsumi's shoulder. "Natsumi, it's okay. You didn't know, and we aren't mad at you."

"I should have knocked," Natsumi muffled through her hands. "I heard laughing, and I thought you guys were just hanging around."

"Oh, we were," Hana laughed. "But it's okay." Natsumi slowly lowered her hands, her face still scarlet from the incident. Hana smiled at her friend before stretching her arms and back. "So, what did you and Ryo do over at your place?"

"I made kake udon, but because of a certain topic we were discussing, I wasn't paying attention to how much seasoning I was putting in. It turned out to be a salty disaster. So, instead I made us sandwiches. Nothing too special," Natsumi said, her hands rubbing against each other on her lap.

"Is everything okay now?" Cye asked as he entered the room wearing a plain white tee and gray sweat pants.

Natsumi quickly averted her gaze to her hands. "Everything is fine," she said in a low voice.

"Why don't Natsumi and I set the table for dinner," Hana suggested, seeing the red color tint the girl's cheeks once more. "I'm sure the stew is done by now."

"I think that's a great idea. I just checked on it, and it should be done in about ten minutes," Cye said. The two girls got up from their spots on the couch and headed into the kitchen. Ryo slowly descended down the carpeted stairs and into the living room.

"Is everything okay?" he asked his comrade who was sitting on the couch. "I'm totally confused."

Cye let out a soft chuckle as Ryo joined him. "Let's just say Natsumi stepped into a pretty steamy situation," Cye said as he looked at his friend with smirk.

"Did she really?" Ryo asked in shock. "No wonder she told me to leave her alone. She must have been so embarrassed. I don't blame her."

"I think she's fine now," Cye said. "Hana talked to her for a bit. It was an accident and these things happen when you live with a bunch of people."

"Things just keep on getting interesting around here, that's for sure," Ryo said, a smile forming across his lips.

Cye laughed at Ryo's comment. "At least things won't be dull around here." The two men smiled at each other before being summoned into the kitchen where dinner was being served.

* * *

><p>AN: **I hope you are enjoying the story so far. The first couple of chapters aren't as lengthy as the future ones will be. The plot will thicken as the chapters go on, so I hope you stick with me. :)

3. Chapter 3

Chapter Three

The feeling of defeat washed over Kento's body as he looked down at his most recent school report. The big 'C', that was written in red pen stared back at him from the paper; it almost seemed like it was mocking him. Hands wrapped around his head as he groaned into the report. He was certain he would pass this one due to the fact that he spent hours in the library looking things up.

"Like I said before, this report is just a taste of what is to come for your final paper at the end of the semester," his teacher announced as she wrote on the blackboard. She turned her head as her brown eyes scouted the classroom, making sure everyone was paying attention. "If you did poorly, I suggest you work harder." She looked at Kento before returning her attention back to the board as she finished writing the assignment.

Kento glared at his teacher's back from where he was sitting. When he first met her on the first day of the semester, he knew she was going to be a bitch. She always wore tight, knee length dresses and had her hair done in a bun. She wasn't ugly, but she wasn't a hot ticket, either. Asking her any kind of question was like pulling teeth from a lion.

"All right. This is your next assignment. Write it down, and I expect it on my desk a week from today," she said with her arms crossed over her flat chest.

Everyone gathered their things and started for the classroom door. Kento banged his head against the desk with a thud; he gently started banging it repeatedly against the plastic surface. He stopped when he felt a light touch on his right shoulder. He picked up his head and saw Natsumi standing next to him, a look of concern on her face.

"Oh, hey, Natsumi," Kento said. "What are you still doing here? Don't you have your next class to get to?"

The brunette shook her head as she sat down at the desk next to his, her expression not changing. "It got canceled today. I have some free time," she explained. "What's going on?"

"I got a lousy 'C' on my report," Kento said as he practically shoved the paper in her face. "All that time in the library, wasted. My head was spinning from all the books that I looked at." His eyes glanced to the side of the room to see if their teacher was still present. Luckily she had packed her things and left the room. He sighed. "It also doesn't help that the teacher is a major bitch. I can't even approach her with simple things."

Natsumi examined the front page of the report; notes written in red flooded the page. "I'm guessing English isn't your strong suit?"

"Why do I need to learn this language when I'm going to become a cook?" Kento asked in an aggravated tone. Then again, half of the classes that were required weren't even related to his major.

"What if you travel to different places that speak the language?" Natsumi asked softly, trying to think of reasons why he would need to know the language.

Kento sat in his seat for a moment and thought the question over. "You do have a pointâ€¦"

A giggle escaped her lips as she got up from her seat. "I can help you, if you want. I got an 'A' on my report."

The Bearer of Hardrock looked at the woman next to him with wide eyes. "You would help me?"

"Yeah. I know how to speak some English. I can help you on the next assignment," she offered.

Kento jumped up from his seat and grabbed Natsumi's hands with his, a grateful smile spread across his face. "Yes, please help me! I can't stand seeing that witch look at me every time she gives me back

papers. It makes me sick just thinking about it." He looked at the woman in front of him with pleading eyes.

A hint of pink spread across her cheeks as she looked at the man in front of her, who was still holding her hands. "I-in that case, we should make sure you don't fail," she said shyly. She still felt awkward around him, even though he said everything was fine and everything was in the past. She couldn't help but remember all the accusations, which were true, and the distaste he had toward her. It surprised her that they all forgave her, but from what she was told, they were more understanding because of what they had dealt with and have seen. It was the least thing she could do for him. Helping any of the guys out was her way of making amends.

Kento let go of her hands and rubbed his midsection. "It's lunchtime, and I am starving. This class drains the energy right out of me," he said as he gathered his stuff. "Let's go meet everyone by the tree." Natsumi simply nodded as she followed her friend out of the classroom.

* * *

><p>Ryo and Cye were the only ones at the usual meeting spot when the duo showed up. Kento heavily plopped himself down onto the fresh-cut grass, opening up his bento box that Cye had made him. He looked around the area and then back to his comrades. "Where's Hana?" he asked.<p>

"She had to go to the library for a research paper that she has to do," Cye explained before biting into his turkey sandwich. "She mentioned that the paper had to be ten pages long."

"Papers suck," Kento said with a frown. "I pity her." He took a turkey with cheese sandwich into his large hand and shoved it into his mouth, savoring the combination of foods.

"It's all part of the college life," Cye said matter-of-factly with a shake of his head. "I take it you failed the paper?" He already knew the answer, but he had to ask. The way Kento acted was proof enough.

Kento swallowed hard as he looked at his best friend with hatred in his eyes. "I worked real hard on that stupid thing and the bitch gives me a 'C'," he sneered. "I'm starting to think she has it out for me."

"Don't be ridiculous," Cye said with a roll of his eyes.

"In any case, Natsumi said she would help me with this next assignment we have," Kento said with a wave of his hand. "I'm going to show this woman that I mean business." The man stuffed the rest of the sandwich into his mouth.

Cye just shook his head more as Ryo looked down at his girlfriend, who was sitting beside him. "That's nice that you offered to help him," Ryo said softly as he wrapped his arm around her tiny frame.

"I could see that he was having problems," Natsumi said quietly. "And I can agree that she isn't the nicest person in the

classroom."

"Thank you, Natsumi," Kento said after taking a swig of his water. "I'm telling you she is the spawn of Satan. It's not even in the middle of the semester yet!"

"You have tackled way worse than this woman," Ryo said with a laugh. "I think you can let this one slide."

Kento scoffed as he finished off his lunch. "I'm not letting her win."

"Suit yourself," Ryo said as he took a bite of his fried rice.

Kento placed the lid on the container and got up from his seat on the grass. "I have to get going. My cooking instructor wants us there early so he can show us some cool moves. At least this is one class that I do excel at."

"Have fun," Cye said with a wave. "We'll see you back at the house."

Kento grinned and then looked at Natsumi. "I'll see you later?"

Natsumi nodded. "I have to stop home first, but I'll be over around five." Kento gave a thumbs up before dashing off to his next destination. She leaned her body into Ryo's, feeling the warmth of his body against hers. His temperature was slightly higher than the average person, but she figured that was because he wore the armor of Wildfire. "Are you going to be home?"

The arm around Natsumi's body tightened. "Yeah," he said as he finished off his lunch. "I don't have work today."

Cye cleared his throat as he stood up from his seat. "I'm going to see how Hana is doing," he said with a smile. "I'll leave you two alone." Ryo just smiled at his friend as Cye made his exit.

"I feel safe with you," Natsumi said softly as she closed her eyes. All the cares she had seemed to evaporate whenever she was with him.

"What?" Ryo asked as he looked down at the brunette. "Where did that come from?"

"I don't know," she said softly. "But whenever I'm with you, I feel like I'm untouchable for some reason." Ryo didn't say anything and rubbed the side of her arm with his hand. "I'm sorry if I'm sounding weird."

A hand gently grabbed Natsumi's chin and moved it so that she was staring into two, beautiful tiger-blue eyes. "You don't have to apologize," he said tenderly. "I'm glad that I make you feel safe, and I promise you that I will keep it that way." He leaned in and captured her soft pink lips with his. Her entire body went limp as his tongue danced with hers. Time seemed to stop at that very moment, and she didn't care if people were noticing. She reluctantly broke the kiss, her breathing labored as she tried to get oxygen into her lungs.

"I have to get to literature class," she said, her cheeks slightly pink. "I'll see you at five."

"I look forward to it," Ryo said and kissed her forehead. "Have fun at class."

"Oh, I will. It's a class that I enjoy," Natsumi said with a smile. She waved and headed toward the building next to the library.

* * *

><p>Cye entered the quiet place that was home to millions of books. Students that occupied the tables were busy flipping through pages, trying to find the right information for their work. Whispers could be heard throughout the area as he searched for the reason why he was there in the first place. He finally found her sitting at the corner table, surrounded by small mountains of books. He quietly walked over and sat down in the wooden chair across from her, a smile plastered on his face. She stopped writing in her notebook when she felt the presence of her visitor.<p>

"Hey, Cye," she smiled. "What brings you here? Do you have a paper to write as well?"

The auburn haired man rested both elbows on the wooden table, clasping his hands together and resting his head on top of them. "I just wanted to see how you were coming along," he said simply. His teal eyes moved to the right and studied the different books that were displayed next to him; most of them were Psychology books.

"It's a challenge," Hana said despairingly as she ran her fingers through her dark bangs. "It feels like these books are draining the life force out of me." She looked at the pile and frowned. "I think my collection got bigger. I don't remember getting up and adding more books, then again, I lost track of a lot of things. Apparently I missed my next class, but it wasn't an important one. The teacher is approachable. I'll explain myself at the next class I have with her. No biggie."

Cye chuckled and placed his hand on top of hers. "Just hang in there. You have chosen this major, after all."

"I know," Hana said with a heavy sigh. "I want to help troubled adolescents with their problems." She softly giggled as sat back against her wooden chair. "I was one at one point. Mind you I was possessed by a maniac, but that's not the point. I want teens to know that they aren't alone in life."

"And neither are you," Cye added as he squeezed her hand. Hana just smiled as Cye removed his hand and stood up from his seat. "I better get going. I have physics class next."

"Okay. I'll see you after my last class," Hana said. Cye leaned over and kissed her forehead then departed out of the area, leaving Hana alone with her books.

* * *

><p>When Natsumi got home, she raced into the kitchen and opened up the refrigerator door. She took out a clear medium sized plastic container with a smile spreading across her face. With the item in her possession, she turned to leave, only to find herself face to face with her uncle.<p>

"Uncle Tim? I didn't know you were home," Natsumi said as she tucked the container into her backpack. "I thought you were working late."

"Where are you going, Natsumi?" he asked. He sounded tired and looked worn out. Dark circles made themselves present underneath his eyes.

"I'm helping someone with their homework assignment," Natsumi explained, trying to get out of the area as fast as possible.

"You know your father is coming home soon," Tim said in a flat tone.

The feeling of dread washed over her body to the point that she almost dropped her bag on the floor. With all that was going on, she lost track of the weeks. "I'm sure he'll be okay with me going out. I've been out before when he was home," she said nervously. Her anxiety was rattling her nerves to the point where she felt sick to her stomach.

"I know you have, and he has noticed," Tim said solemnly. "I just want you to be careful. You know that he can be unpredictable at times."

"I know," Natsumi whispered. The grip on the handle to her bag tightened as she slowly moved toward the exit of the kitchen. "I'll be home later, okay?" Tim only nodded as Natsumi made her way down the hall and out the front door. She stopped for a moment after closing the door behind her, allowing her nerves to settle down. She took a seat on the concrete stoop and covered her face with her hands, anguish slowly taking over. "I can't do this anymore!"

* * *

><p>Ryo opened the front door to find Natsumi standing before him, looking down at the concrete, her eye lids half closed. "Is everything okay?" he asked as he watched his girlfriend slowly look up at him as if in a daze. "You seem troubled about something."<p>

Natsumi snapped out of her stupor and shook her head. "Oh, no. I'm fine," she said, smiling weakly. "I was just deep in thought." She was so preoccupied with her thoughts that she didn't notice that she was standing right outside the Ryo's house. He was obviously waiting for her because she didn't knock on the door, or did she?

The bearer of Wildfire gave her a look, skepticism settling in for a moment, but then shrugged his shoulders. "Well, don't just stand there. Come in," Ryo chuckled as he stepped to the side so she could enter the house.

Natsumi barely stepped into the kitchen when she heard heavy footsteps heading her way. Kento entered the kitchen with a dirty,

white, empty ceramic plate in his hand. "Hey," he said as he placed the plate into the stainless steel sink. "You ready for me?"

"Sure, I guess," Natsumi said softly. "I just have to give Ryo something."

"Gotcha. I'll go set up in the living room," he said as he exited the area, leaving the couple alone.

"You have something for me?" Ryo inquired. He watched as Natsumi unzipped her backpack and produced the medium-sized container. She handed it to Ryo, her cheeks a hint of pink. He took off the lid and saw that it had kake udon within it.

"I made sure it was right this time," she said, avoiding his gaze. "It shouldn't be as salty."

A chuckle emanated from Ryo's throat as he made his way around the island that was sitting in the middle of the kitchen. He stopped at one of the drawers and took out a pair of red plastic chopsticks. He picked up a few noodles with the utensil and placed the food in his mouth. He slowly chewed the slippery noodles and swallowed with a smile on his lips.

"Way better than last time," he said as he took another bite. "Perfect."

A sense of pride filled the young woman's being as she watched the man she loved eat the food she made. "Thank you, Ryo. It means a lot."

"I'll finish the rest later. I promised Cye I would help him with something outside," he said as he placed the lid back on the container. He leaned in and placed a gentle kiss on her lips. "Have fun with Kento. Don't let him get too distracted."

"I won't," she smiled as she walked out of the kitchen.

* * *

><p>When she entered the living room, she saw Kento sitting on the sofa with his workbook open in front of him; a puzzled look was well-written on his face.<p>

"I have to write a two page story in English? I just did that and failed," Kento said. A groan escaped his lips as he massaged his temple with his hands. "Can the witch think of anything else besides stories?"

"It'll be okay. I'm here to help you," Natsumi said reassuringly. She sat down next to him on the leather sofa, taking out her own workbook and a notebook. "You have been getting C's, so you're not terrible. You just need some more practice, that's all."

"Says you," Kento scoffed. "How did you become so good at this language, anyway?" He looked at the brunette that was sitting next to him. An eyebrow rose when he saw her eyes grow wide.

She stopped writing in her notebook and stared at the blue horizontal lines across the paper. "My fatherâ€| grew up in England. I picked up

some English from him," she said quietly. Her fingers tightly gripped the pen that was in her hand.

Kento waited to see if there was more, but she didn't say anything else. Instead, she just continued to stare at her notebook. He noticed a hint of pain in her eyes as the atmosphere started to feel awkward. After clearing his throat, he brought his attention back to his workbook. "So I just need to write two pages and call it a day?"

"Umâ€¦ yes," Natsumi said as she looked at the assignment. "Start writing some things down, and I'll take a look at them."

"No problem," Kento smiled and started to jot things down with his pen.

Two hours passed, and the two students finally finished their assignments. Natsumi explained the errors Kento made on his paper, which he picked up as the time went by.

"I will show that witch next week that I am no idiot," he said as he placed his school books in his orange bag. "Thank you, Natsumi, for helping me out."

"Don't mention it," she blushed. "It's not an easy language to learn. You have to keep up with it and practice."

"Yeah, yeah," Kento said with a wave of his hand. He looked to his right and saw that Natsumi was sitting there, cheeks rosy red and her hands fumbling with each other. "What's wrong?"

Natsumi snapped her head in Kento's direction, a confused look on her features. "What do you mean?"

"You are sitting there red in the face as if you are on a date or something," Kento explained with a smile. "What is up with you?"

She placed a gentle hand on one of her cheeks, feeling the warmth at the touch. "It's still awkwardâ€¦ when you are with someone who has hated you at one point in your life. I'm still getting used to being around you all, even though you all said everything was forgiven."

Kento's smile remained after the girl's confession. "When we first started out as Ronin Warriors, lots of events happened that we couldn't really emotionally grasp. As time went on, though, we realized that people end up the way they are because of the evil in this world and that they can change," he explained. "We met a few of those people who ended up turning into our allies."

"I see," was all Natsumi could say as she leaned against the back of the sofa.

A noise emanated from Kento's midsection, which resulted in him rubbing his empty stomach. "I'm getting hungry. I wonder if Cye is back from training with Hana."

Natsumi looked at the dark blue-haired man with a confused look on her face. "Training? With what?"

Kento leaned back against the back of the sofa and stretched his tired muscles. "Cye is helping Hana train. She still struggles with the power she has. They started training before that evil brat made you her guinea pig." The mention of Kurushimi made a shiver go down Natsumi's spine. "Her power increases based on her emotions, I guess. Her aunt really upset her and that caused some kind of destruction."

"Her aunt?" Natsumi asked curiously. She sat up straight in her seat, looking at Kento with interest. She didn't know that much about Hana's family.

"Yeah. That bitch rejected Hana, telling her never to come back into the family," Kento said through clenched teeth.

"They abandoned her?" she asked in disbelief.

"Yeah. A bunch of scumbags, if you ask me," Kento sneered. "Actually, I shouldn't say all of them. Her uncle did show up at Mia's to see how she was doing. I don't know how, but even with all the bad things that has happened to her, she has pulled through."

Natsumi sat still for a moment in thought. "Can you tell me where Hana is?"

* * *

><p>Deep within the woods that were located behind the house, yelling could be heard. Hana stood with her feet spread apart, her hands held out in front, her breathing labored. Cye and Ryo stood off to the side in their sub-armor. The black-haired woman regained composure and looked at the clearing in front of her. The group of trees that were once standing in front of her was now lying on the ground on top of each other.<p>

"You're still not controlling your emotions," Cye said as he walked over to his girlfriend. He brushed a few strands of hair from her dirty face. "That blast shouldn't have happened."

Hana wiped her brow with the back of her hand. "You don't think I know that?" she asked, her tone almost hard. "We have been at this for hours and all I feel is hate toward _her_." She sat herself down on the dirt ground, crossed legged. She took a deep breath through her nose and exhaled out through her mouth. "I'm surprised I lasted this long. I could have sworn my energy level would have plummeted by now."

"You are doing fine," Ryo said as he approached the couple. "This is going to take time."

"I want this resolved now," Hana said tenaciously. "I don't want to wait until something else happens and I destroy more lives."

"I understand that you want this problem fixed right away, but that's not being realistic," Cye said in a calm tone. "We are here to help you."

Hana sighed loudly as if in defeat. "I know and I appreciate all the help."

The sound of a twig snapping made the trio look to their side. Natsumi emerged from the thicket of trees and into the clearing. She noticed Hana sitting on the ground with the two men clad in armor.

"Hana, are you okay?" she asked as she made her way to her friend, concern etched on her face.

Hana smiled and nodded her head. "Yeah. I just overdid myself, again," she said with a small laugh.

"Are you all done with homework?" Ryo asked as he walked over to the brunette.

"Yeah. Kento just needs to practice more," Natsumi replied. "I'm sure he'll pass the class."

"I hope so, because I don't want to hear him complaining anymore," Cye said, rolling his eyes playfully.

Natsumi giggled at the comment then looked at the two men, remembering the reason why she came all the way out there. "Do you mind if I talk to Hana alone?"

"Of course," Cye said as his sub-armor disappeared and his street clothes reappeared on his body. "I'm sure Kento is starving by now."

"He did say he was hungry," Natsumi mentioned with a smile.

"Figures," Cye said with a heavy sigh. "I better make dinner before he puts on an act."

"We'll see you two later," Ryo said with a simple wave as the two men headed out of the area.

Hana waited until the two figures were out of sight before looking up at Natsumi. "What's up?" she asked. The timid girl sat down across from her friend, her nerves slowly making them known throughout her body. Her Persian blue eyes looked into Hana's cobalt blue eyes. The words got caught in her throat as she sat there. "What is it? Is something wrong?"

"Noâ€¦ I meanâ€¦ yesâ€¦" Natsumi stuttered before looking down at the dirt.

"You came here for something," Hana said as she watched the girl's hands move about on her lap. "You can talk to me."

"K-Kento told me about what happened with you and your family," Natsumi said quietly. "He told me that you went through so much and that you conquered all these obstacles. I justâ€¦ wanted to know more about youâ€¦ I guess."

Hana picked up a few small stones that were lying on the ground. Purple aurora surrounded the stones, making them levitate into the air above the palm of her hand. "You want to learn about me and my family?" Hana asked as she looked at her. Natsumi looked at the magic that was happening in front of her with wide eyes. She experienced

the wrath of Hana's power before and it took all of her might not to back away in terror. "My mom was a teacher at the college we attend to right now. She was a music teacher. She loved music and I think that's where my little sister, Aika, got it from. Aika always listened to music and she loved to play the violin. She told me at one point that her goal was to play every instrument that was known to man. At that time, I didn't really care what she wanted to do. She was six years younger than me. I had a twin brother who was older than me by two minutes. His name was Ken. He was on the basketball team at our middle school. My dad was an engineer. He was hard on me at times, especially during my last year in middle school, but he meant well. He would always come home with a smile on his face." Tears slowly rolled down Hana's dirty cheeks as her heart felt like it was being torn in two.

"If you don't mind me asking, what happened during your final year in middle school?" Natsumi asked quietly as Hana wiped the moisture from her eyes.

Hana's face grew hard as she dropped the stones back on the ground. "I was a rebel; at least, that's what some people called me. Others said I was a bully. It didn't really matter to me because I didn't care. I skipped classes, picked on people, and occasionally beat them up. I would go out and come home really late. That drove my parents insane, especially my dad. I met this one girl named Sakiko on the roof of our school. She asked me what my reason was to be up there. Looking at her, I told her that I was fed up with school and life. She had this evil smirk on her face when she heard my answer. From that day on, she and I would hang out together. We went to stores to shoplift, hung out at the park, and other things. The one thing I did not do was drugs or drink. She did all that."

"Did your parents know about her?" Natsumi asked curiously.

"Yeah, they knew. My mom tried to reason with me and my dad had forbidden me to go see her. Of course, I didn't listen. At the time, my brother didn't want anything to do with me. We would get into verbal fights when he tried to reason with me. At one point, I scared Aika because of my outbursts. You have no idea how many times I got scolded by my dad. Sakiko set me up at one point during all this. She was outraged with one of her teachers and she told me she was going to get him back. She never told me the reason. All she said to me was that she needed my help. We broke into his house late at night. She started taking anything she could get her hands on. I was on the lookout. I heard a noise and told her he was coming. She gave me that evil smirk and told me good luck. She ditched me and before I could, he caught me. He was an old man in his late sixties and I told him what had happened. Somehow, he forgave me. I wasn't off the hook just because he forgave me. My parents were told about the incident and I was grounded. That didn't stop me from sneaking out at night."

"Geez," Natsumi said in disbelief. Hana didn't seem like the type of person who could do all that. She didn't say anything more and just listened.

"It gets worse. A couple of days after the incident at the teacher's house, I started collecting weird things: old looking torches, candles, statues, you name it. It was at that point, Shijisha made herself known. She was able to take over my body, but not for long

periods of time. At that point I would black out and find myself in weird places. All the stuff I gathered was for the awakening of Akui. I met Sakiko at the park one night. She was with a couple of friends. I was enraged and started yelling at her."

Hana's hands turned into tight fists to the point her knuckles turned white, her lips were a thin line as her blood started to boil. "I hated her for what she did. She totally used me, and I was dumb enough to even listen to her in the first place. We got into a fist fight, but I lost. She laughed along with her friends, and they left me there on the ground. I went home only to find Ken waiting for me on the stoop of the house. I met his gaze and he slapped me across the face. He told me mom was ill and I was the reason why she was in bad shape. He informed me that she was in the hospital and that dad and Aika were there. She got sick and then collapsed. The doctors said it was because she was over-stressed. I don't really know what happened, but I dropped to my knees and started crying."

Hana paused and swallowed the huge lump that was forming in her throat. In her head, she could still see the scene. An oxygen mask was placed over her mother's nose and mouth. IV tubes were in both of her arms. The heart monitor beeping with each heartbeat. She had dark circles under her eyes and she looked white as a ghost. Hana could feel tears brimming beneath her eyes again. She wiped them away before they could fall down her face.

"I went to see her and apologized over and over. My mom just smiled and said that it was okay. I didn't understand and told her that she should be angry. She said that she still loved me and that she would always forgive. I stopped my rebellious act and started attending my classes. My mom was out of the hospital the next couple of weeks. Even though I changed how I acted, I still went out at night."

"To bring Akui back?" Natsumi inquired.

Hana nodded. "I think the reason why I went through that phase was because Shijisha was getting stronger. All the negative energy that she possessed was coursing through me." Hana closed her eyes and took a deep breath through her nostrils. "I can't believe I told you all that. I've been trying to block that out of my memory."

"You're strong, though, unlike me," Natsumi said quietly, almost to the point of a whisper.

Hana raised her head and looked at her friend. "What?"

"With everything you have gone through, you still go on. You've faced many obstacles head on. As for me, I'm a coward," Natsumi said lowering her head.

"I'm not as strong as you think I am," Hana pointed out. "If I really was strong as you say, the power I possess wouldn't get the best of me. Because of this power that was left to me, I destroyed my chance of any future with my relatives."

"Kento did mention that part," Natsumi said solemnly. "That you were banished by your aunt."

The mention of her aunt made the heat within Hana rise to an alarming rate. She could feel her power trying to break through. "It's best we

don't mention her," Hana said as she closed to eyes, trying to clear her mind.

"I'm sorry," Natsumi apologized. "I didn't knowâ€|" Her aunt was definitely a trigger word and she felt bad about bringing her up.

Hana smiled at her friend once her body calmed down. "It's fine. Now, what's all this talk about you being a coward?"

Silence filled the air as Natsumi sat where she was, looking off to the side. "I can't tell youâ€|" she whispered.

"Are you in trouble?" Hana asked. "Please, if you are, you have to let us know."

"I can't just tell you guys what is going on," Natsumi said, her voice breaking. "If I doâ€|" Tears started to leak from her eyes as she placed her hands over her face. The feeling of stress and anxiety was taking over as she tried to calm down. Her shoulders started to shake.

"You don't have to talk about it, but if something is happening, you have the power to change it," Hana said softly.

"H-how do I? I'm afraid," Natsumi cried. Hana moved closer and wrapped her arms around the shaking girl's body. "I'm afraid of what will happen."

"You said I was strong in some sense. I tell myself that it's my life and only I can change what happens in it," Hana said as she rubbed her friend's back. "That's what you need to do. Whatever is causing you grief, you have to try to not let it get to you. It's a hard thing to do, but you can't give up. Take the bull by the horns and say enough is enough. I know you have the courage deep within you."

Natsumi took the back of her hand and wiped the tears from her eyes. "Thank you, Hana."

"Don't mention it," Hana said with a smile. "We all feel regret and anguish at some point in our lives, right?" The two girls got up from the ground and brushed themselves off. The sun was setting, turning the sky into a hue of bright orange and pink. "Let's go see what Cye is making for dinner. Hopefully there is still some left for us if Kento hasn't eaten it all by now." The duo laughed as they headed out of the training area and back toward the house.

* * *

><p>AN: **I decided to post a chapter early. We finally get to know a little bit more about Hana's past and who she used to be, which is one of the main reasons for the early update. A lot more is to come so stay tuned.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter Four

Hana woke up the next morning to her throat feeling like it was on fire. Pressure could be felt where her sinuses were, restricting oxygen to flow through her nostrils. Her body ached and begged to stay under the warm blankets. After weakly turning her head to the left, she found herself alone in the room. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath through her parted lips. She couldn't, nor did she want to, get up from her spot.

The sound of the bedroom door opening roused her. Cye entered the room, already dressed in his work clothes; he was clad in a tan button-down shirt and brown pants. Concern was clearly showing on his face as he walked over to the sick woman in bed.

"You are slightly warm," he said as he placed his right hand on her forehead. "How do you feel?"

"I feel like shit," Hana replied in a nasally voice. "I don't want to get up." She pulled the light blue covers up to her chin and looked at Cye with tired eyes.

"I can see that. When I woke up, you were pale. You were also snoring really loud," Cye said with a small smile. "You should call out of work today."

"I should," Hana said as she looked up at the white ceiling. "I don't want to get people sick."

"Then it's settled," Cye said as he brushed a few stray strands of black hair from her face. "I have work until four today. When I get home, I'll make you some soup. I'll talk to Kento and see if he can look after you." He leaned forward and placed a kiss on her warm forehead. "I love you."

"I love you, too," Hana smiled. "Have a good day at work and say hi to Umi for me."

"I will," Cye chuckled. "I'm sure she would love to see you. You have to come by one day and see her."

"When I'm feeling better," Hana promised and rolled over to her side, trying to find a comfortable spot.

Kento yawned as he descended the stairs, wearing a gray t-shirt and his orange boxers. He scratched his side as he headed toward the kitchen, his stomach growling in hunger. His tired eyes spotted Cye walking toward him, his face serious.

"Dude, what's up? What's with the face?" Kento asked sleepily.

"Hana is sick. I told her to call off work today. I have to get to work in a few minutes. Do you think you can look after her until I get back?" Cye inquired.

"She's sick?" Kento asked. He was suddenly wide awake after hearing the news. "Yeah, I can look after her. Is she seriously sick?"

"I don't think it's that serious. She sounds like she has a cold or something. I just don't want her over-exerting herself," Cye explained. "Knowing her, she'll try to do things herself."

"Don't worry, man," Kento said with a wide smile on his round face. "I'll make sure she's comfortable until you get home. You can count on me."

Cye smiled at his best friend and patted his shoulder. "I know, and that's why I asked you. I'll see you all later." The sea-loving warrior entered the kitchen and out the front door.

Fog surrounded the area Hana was in; the air was thick and cold. Wrapping her arms around her body, she made it through the fog, trying to figure out where she was. The outline of a familiar house came into view as she continued to walk. She stopped mid-stride when she saw a figure sitting on the stoop of the house. Her heart sank into her stomach as she inched closer to the person. The person looked up at her with the same cobalt eyes she had, his hair the same color, as well.

"Ken?" Hana asked as she felt tears well up in her eyes. "Is that you?" Her heart swelled with happiness seeing her brother sitting before her.

"As if you care," he snarled. "Mom is in the hospital because of your foolishness. You only care about yourself."

"T-that's not true," Hana stammered, tears fully flowing down her cheeks. "I changed. I'm no longer the person you used to know."

"I don't want anything to do with you anymore," he said with a look of disgust. The young boy got up from his seat and started for the front door of the house.

Hana chased her brother into the house, but stopped once she got inside. Everything in the house was burnt. The air reeked of smoke while soot littered the ground. Charred remains of what used to be objects lay on the ground along with three unnoticeable bodies. Falling to her knees, Hana sobbed into her hands, her heart shattering into pieces all over again.

"Hana?"

She picked up her head and looked around the deserted area. The familiar voice called out to her again as she stood up from where she was kneeling, trying to find the owner of the voice. She headed for the door that was straight ahead of her.

Hana's eyes flew open to find Kento standing over her, a worried expression plastered on his face.

"Are you okay?" he asked in a concerned voice. "You were crying."

She raised a hand to her cheek and felt moisture on her skin. Slowly sitting up, she realized that her night shirt was soaking wet. "I must have been sweating, too. I'm sorry, Ken," she said as she rubbed her eyes with the back of her hands.

"Ken?" he asked dumbfounded. "You never called me that before."

Hana looked at Kento with puffy, red eyes. "My twin brother was named Ken. I guess the dream is still fresh in my mind. I'm sorry."

Kento sat on the edge of the bed and placed a hand on her shoulder. "I guess it can be a nickname," he smiled. "What was the dream about?"

Tears started to fall uncontrollably, her heart breaking as she remembered the horrible scene in her mind.

"My brother told me that he wanted nothing to do with me, that I was the reason why my mother was placed in the hospital. It's all true. It was like I was visiting the past. Then when I entered the house, I saw the burnt remains of what was left." She choked a sob as she cried into her hands. "I-I guess when I told Natsumi about my pastâ€¦ the wounds opened back upâ€¦" Strong arms embraced Hana's small frame. A hand rubbed her back as she cried into Kento's shoulder. His heart wept for the woman in his arms, the woman he cared for a lot. She pulled away and wiped her eyes with the covers. "I'm sorry. I'mâ€¦ okay now."

"How are you feeling besides what happened in your dream?" Kento asked softly, his hand not leaving Hana's shoulder.

"My body still aches and my throat is still sore. Maybe I should see the doctor," Hana said. "Maybe he can give me something."

"I can take you there," Kento offered. "It would be best if you didn't drive."

"Only if you want to," Hana said. "I don't want to be a burden for you on your day off."

Kento playfully slapped her arm. "You're not a burden to me, and you would be foolish to think so," he smiled. "If you refuse, I'm going to pick you up and put you in the car."

"I guess I can't refuse. I'm too weak to retaliate," she smiled back, feeling slightly better, mentally. "Let me get dressed and you can take me."

"You got it, toots."

Gems of different variety glistened within the confinement of the display cases. Cye browsed through each case, looking for that special item that would grab his attention.

"Is there anything you need help with?"

Cye picked up his head and saw a tall, slender woman in a black business suit looking down at him with a smile. He straightened up to meet her gaze.

"I'm looking for a ring," he replied. "There are so many here, I don't know where to start."

"Is it an engagement ring?" the woman asked, the smile getting wider at the question.

Blood rushed to Cye's cheeks, his face heating up. "N-noâ€¦" he stammered, feeling flustered all of a sudden. He knew that question would be brought up when he walked into the store and told them what

he was looking for. "I'm looking for something for my girlfriend's birthday."

"I see," the woman said with a thoughtful expression on her face. "We do have some really cute, simple rings over in this case." She walked over to the case on the right near the back. "These rings aren't too flashy."

He bent down and looked at the different assortment of silver and gold rings. His eyes roamed the area until they settled on a silver ring that had a heart-shaped diamond in the center. It wasn't too big and it had Hana's birthstone. It was perfect. "That one," Cye pointed to the ring within the display case.

"Excellent choice," the woman said as she opened the door to the case. She took the ring out of its holder and gave to Cye to evaluate.

He looked at the silver ring at all angles, then smiled. "I'll take it."

The woman took the ring back and got a purple box to put it in. "You have good taste in jewelry," she commented.

"Really? This is my first time going jewelry shopping. I haven't stepped foot into one of these shops until today," Cye blushed as he handed over the money for the ring.

"Well, she's a lucky woman to have you," the woman said as she handed Cye his purchase. "I hope all goes well for you."

"Thank you," Cye smiled and exited out the store. He smiled to himself on his purchase as he walked down the sidewalk with a skip in his step, the box tucked safely in his pants pocket.

The front door opened and Hana sluggishly walked into the kitchen. Pills rattled within a bottle as she placed the bag down on the island. She made her way to the cherry-wood cabinets and opened up one of the doors. After grabbing a glass from the cabinet, she turned on the faucet, allowing water to flow within the cup. She shuffled over to the bag and took out the pill bottle. Removing the cap, she placed two beige-colored capsules into her palm. She placed the medicine in her mouth and took a swig of water.

"Did you take the medicine?" Kento asked as he entered the house with bags of groceries. He shut the front door behind him and placed the bags down on the island. "It's a good thing it's just a sinus infection."

"I guess," Hana said after she finished her water. "I still feel like shit."

"Well, that medicine should start to do its magic soon," Kento said as he removed the vegetables from the plastic bag. "Go rest. Cye should be home soon and I'm sure he'll take good care of you."

Hana smiled at her dark blue-haired friend. "Thanks, Ken. You're the best. I'll see you later."

The bedroom door could be heard closing as the bearer of Hardrock

continued to put away the groceries he had purchased after their visit to the doctor.

"What's the verdict on her condition?" Ryo asked as he entered the area. He was wearing a red tank top and a black towel was draped over his shoulders, his hair damp.

"Just a sinus infection," Kento said simply. "She took her medicine already and is in her room."

"At least she didn't get sick on her birthday," Ryo said. "That would be horrible."

Kento stopped gathering the items from within the plastic bags and looked at his leader, eyes wide. "Her birthday is this Wednesday?"

Ryo nodded. "I was thinking about going over to the park for some Cherry Blossom viewing. I think there is a festival being held there, too. I'm going to pitch the idea to Cye. I think it would be a good idea for all of us to get together and celebrate."

"Not a bad idea. Wish I had thought of it," Kento said with his signature wide grin.

"Late as usual," Ryo grinned back. "I'll talk to Natsumi about it, too. I haven't spoken to her for the last two days."

"You haven't?" Kento inquired after placing the last canned food into the pantry. "What's going on?"

Ryo shrugged his shoulders. "I don't really know. She said she was really busy at home and couldn't really talk. I don't like it, but I don't want to pry too much, you know?"

"She gets kind of strange when it comes to her family," Kento admitted, sitting down on one of the wooden stools. "Even if we mention something to her relating to her family life, she gets all strange. No offense."

"Like I said, I don't want to pry too much into that part of her life," Ryo said as he took a seat next to his friend. "I'm just letting her have her space."

"Why are girls so complicated?" Kento groaned into his hands. Ryo chuckled when Cye emerged from behind the front door. "Hey, buddy! How was work? Save any new fishies?"

Cye took his shoes off at the door and joined his two friends. "Not today," he said with a smile. "How's Hana doing? Is she feeling any better?"

"A simple sinus infection," Kento explained. "She's resting in the bedroom."

"Thank you for taking care of her, Kento," he said, patting his friend on his broad shoulder. "I really appreciate it."

"Don't mention it," Kento widely grinned. "I picked up some food, too."

"Good. I'll make dinner as soon as I check up on her," Cye said as he started toward the hallway that was next to the kitchen.

"Hey, Cye!" Ryo called out. "Just a moment."

Cye stopped in his tracks and turned to face his leader. "What is it?"

"I was thinking about going to the park for some Cherry Blossom viewing," Ryo whispered. "I think it'd be a perfect way to celebrate Hana's birthday."

A smile spread across Cye's lips at the idea he was just given. "That sounds like an excellent idea. We can all meet up after I do my little thing for her."

"Then it's settled," Ryo smiled and went back to sitting with Kento at the island.

Cye slowly opened the bedroom door and peeked inside. Hana was fast asleep underneath the covers, her mouth slightly open as she breathed. He smiled as he entered the bedroom. He planted a gentle kiss on her cheek before heading out.

"Cye?" Hana asked sleepily. She picked her head up slightly to get a view of her company. "How was work?"

"It was okay," Cye said as he made his way back into the room. He sat down on the edge of the bed and rubbed Hana's arm gently and slowly. "I was worried about you all day today."

A smile formed on her slightly chapped lips. "I'm okay. It's just a stupid sinus infection. I'm sure I'll be better by tomorrow."

"So I was told," Cye chuckled. "Get some rest. I'll bring in your dinner when it's ready." He got up from his seat on the bed and headed out the door, closing it behind him.

Hana wiggled in bed, trying to get comfortable. With a content smile still on her face, she drifted off to sleep once again.

Two days came and went, and Hana was starting to feel a lot better. Her throat no longer felt like sandpaper and her body aches disappeared. The sun was smiling high in the cloudless sky as she walked toward the double doors to a building. She entered the blue-lit area where different types of fish were swimming around in big tanks to the side. Cye took her here on one of their first dates and the place hadn't changed. She stopped mid-step when she saw a blonde-haired man heading her way.

"Are you Hana?" he asked as he approached her.

"Yes, I am," she said as the man stopped in front of her. He was wearing the same uniform Cye wore when he had work.

"The name's Youta," he said, extending his left hand out. "I'm a colleague of Cye's."

"Oh," Hana said as she took his hand for a handshake. "Nice to meet

you, Youta. Where is Cye?" She looked around the area, but didn't see her boyfriend anywhere.

A big smile crept on the young man's face. "He's waiting for you in the back. I was told to come get you when you arrived." With their hands still touching, he led her to the back. "He's a good guy. Always comes in early and always talks to the fish. They seem to understand him, too, which I find funny."

Hana smiled to herself, knowing the reason behind the communication of Cye and the sea-life creatures. The two stopped once they got to the back door. Cye was standing at the edge of what looked like a huge swimming pool. He looked up and smiled at the two figures.

"Thanks for bringing her here, Youta!" Cye called out. He waved Hana down to come join him at the bottom.

"It was nice meeting you," Hana said as she headed down the stone steps. She knew exactly where she was and excitement ran through her body as she reached the bottom. "Where is she?"

Cye chuckled and planted a kiss on her lips. "She'll be right up. I told her you were coming and she seemed excited, too."

"It's been a while since I was here," Hana said almost in awe. A sound of water spraying caught Hana's attention as she looked to her left. A beautiful orca whale came to the edge of the tank. "There she is. Nice to see you again, Umi."

Cye looked at the whale as it nodded its head up and down. "Umi has something to give you."

"Really?" Hana inquired. Cye raised his arm straight in the air causing Umi to open her mouth. Inside, lying on her tongue was a purple box. "What is that?"

"It's your birthday present," Cye said as he took the box from the whale's mouth. He walked over to the dark-haired woman and handed her the box.

Her eyes widened as she lifted the top of the box, revealing the silver ring with the heart-shaped diamond. She looked at the ring speechless. "It's lovely," she said as she placed the ring on her right hand. "It's just my style, too."

"Happy birthday," Cye whispered, a warm smile spread across his lips.

Hana smiled brightly and kissed him on the lips, her arms wrapping around his neck. He placed both hands on the side of her head, deepening the kiss. Clicking sounds could be heard next to them, causing them to reluctantly pull away.

"I think Umi is getting jealous," Cye laughed. The whale nodded her head at his statement. "Why don't you pet her to make her feel better?"

Hana knelt down at the edge of the tank, her hand extended outward. Umi placed her nose under Hana's hand. The rubbery texture of the

whale made Hana giggle as she rubbed the nose. "It seems like she is doing well."

"She is," Cye replied with his arms crossed over his chest. "Hopefully we can set her free in a few months."

Hana stopped rubbing as her heart sank. She knew it was best that her friend was released back into the wild where she could be with her own kind, but just knowing that she wouldn't be able to see her made her sad. "That's great news."

"I'm going to miss her, though," Cye said sadly. "But it'll be good for her to be in her own environment."

Hana got to her feet and walked back to where Cye was standing. "I agree. She would be happier."

Cye wrapped his arms around her in a tight hug. His watch beeped, and he looked down at the time. "We have to get going. The others are waiting for us."

"Where are we going?" Hana asked as she waved goodbye to her sea friend.

"The park," Cye replied as he walked with her back into the building.

The scent of the Cherry Blossom wafted the air along with loose petals here and there. Families and friends sat under the huge flower-covered trees. Music was playing and laughter could be heard in all directions. In one corner, a kickball match was happening between kids. Sweets galore were spread across the green-checkered blanket on the grass. Different types of drinks and teas were present as Kento picked up a stick with dango on it.

"Feel free to try the mochi," Mia said as she took a sip of her iced green tea. "I made them from scratch."

"Fantastic!" Kento exclaimed as he grabbed a strawberry one and stuffed the chewy treat into his mouth. He smiled happily. "Delish."

"I didn't know you could make mochi," Ryo said as he grabbed one for himself before Kento took the rest.

"This is actually my first time trying," Mia confessed. "I saw a recipe in a book and I thought I would give it a try."

"It's very good," Natsumi complimented as she took another bite. "Not too sticky, either."

"And here's the woman of the hour!" Kento announced as he saw Hana and Cye walk up to the spot. "Happy birthday, Hana!"

"Thank you," Hana blushed as she sat down on the blanket. She wasn't really a fan of being the center of attention.

"Happy birthday," Mia smiled as she gave Hana an envelope.

"Thank you, Mia," Hana said and hugged her friend. "It's good to see

you."

"Happy birthday," Natsumi said with a smile.

"Thank you, Natsumi," Hana said. "I'm glad to see you could join us."

"I am, too," the shy girl said with a small smile. "I've just been so busy lately."

"Understandable," Hana said as she poured herself some juice.

Kento's eyes moved to the shiny object on Hana's finger as he swallowed the food that was currently in his mouth. "What's that on your finger?" he asked curiously.

Hana brought her hand up and showed him the ring. "Cye got it for me for my birthday."

"Cye, you dog!" Kento said with a hard slap to Cye's back, making the man cough on the impact.

"It's very nice," Natsumi said as she looked at the heart-shaped diamond. "It suits you perfectly."

"I think so, too," Hana smiled in agreement. "This birthday has turned out to be one of the best. Thank you, all."

"It's always good when friends are involved," Mia added. "I miss the days when things were kind of carefree."

"What days were those?" Ryo laughed. "If we weren't in school, there would be battles to be fought."

Kento slammed his right fist into his left hand. "There is always some wacko out there," he said with a grin. "And we'll be ready for them."

"Well, I hope there isn't any wacko out there for a while," Cye said as he finished his dango. "I like this normal life, thank you very much."

"Of course you do," Kento said with another slap to his friend's back. "The mundane life suits you."

Cye growled and looked at his friend with narrowed eyes. "Will you stop that?!"

Hana laughed as the two stared each other down. She was with Cye on the fact that she preferred a lifestyle free of battles, but in the back of her mind, she knew that it wasn't meant to be. Kento was right about there always being an enemy to fight as long as there is evil in the world. She closed her eyes and shook her head of her thoughts. She laughed with the rest of the group, unaware of a figure nearby with a camera in his hand.

Everyone headed in after a long day of fun. Ryo kissed Natsumi goodbye before she headed home and Mia said her goodbyes at the park. Hana exited the bathroom after washing up, wearing one of Cye's

t-shirts as a nightie. She headed to the bedroom that she shared with Cye. When she entered the room, Cye was sitting up in bed, wearing nothing but his boxers.

"Today was a lot of fun," Hana smiled as she closed the bedroom door behind her. "Did you come up with the park idea?"

"No. It was actually Ryo who shot the idea at me," Cye replied. "I thought it was a great idea."

"It was. I am still filled with excitement," Hana said as she joined him on the bed.

"Are you now?" Cye asked as he leaned over her. "Exactly how excited are you?"

A grin formed on her lips as she wrapped her arms around his neck. "Why don't you find out for yourself?" She pulled him toward her, capturing his lips with hers. Her tongue easily snaked its way into his mouth. She moaned as she felt him shift on top of her, his erection already standing proud against her bare leg.

He moved his hand up her shirt and grabbed onto one of her perky breasts. A low moan erupted from her throat as his finger flicked her erect nipple. Cye broke the kiss and hastily removed the shirt from her body. He bent down and sucked on her breast, causing her to moan loudly. The ache between her legs increased as he moved to the next breast. Her hand moved between the two of them and found what she was looking for. Cye moaned her name when he felt her hand wrap around his member.

"Let me remove this from you," she said huskily as she removed his boxers, freeing his erection.

She kissed him passionately while removing her wet panties. Her delicate hand found his hard member and stroked it. Their tongues danced with one another as Cye shut his eyes tightly, moaning into her mouth. Hana broke the kiss and shoved him on his back. His breath hitched as he felt her mouth surround him. Grabbing a fistful of sheets in hands, he moaned loudly, feeling the pressure build within his center. He placed a hand on her shoulder, making her stop her movements.

"I don't want to come," Cye panted. "I want to be in you."

Hana crawled over to the front of the bed and lay on her back. "Then come and get me." She placed her hand by her sweet spot and started rubbing her swollen bud. Cye watched in wonderment as his girlfriend was pleasing herself. He grabbed a condom and hastily placed it on his member. He removed her hand from herself before impaling himself into her depths. He painfully started slow, feeling every inch of her as her walls expanded. Hana grabbed onto his arms for support as his thrusts increased. The fire within her center grew as she cried out his name. Grunts escaped through his lips as his thrusts became harder and more powerful.

Her nails dug into his arms as the fire within her burst. "Cye!" Her body shook as her orgasm rocked her. Feeling her insides contract and her juices flowing around him, he let out a deep groan before

releasing his seed, his shaft pulsating with each load. After pulling out of her depths, he collapsed next to her, both of them gasping for air.

"I guessâ€|you wereâ€| that excited," Cye panted with a smile on his face. Hana only smiled and moved in closer, their sweaty bodies touching. Cye lazily swung his arm around her and held her close. "Happy birthday, love."

End
file.